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FLORIDA WAR.

Speech of Mr. Giddings,

OF

O H I O,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

FEBRUARY 9, 1841.



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INTRODUCTION.

The present Indian Policy of our Government may be regarded as having become settled under Mr. Madison. The object of that policy has been the expulsion or extermination of the Indian Tribes, and the acquisition of their lands. Since 1791, about 200 treaties have been made with the Indians, *in each of which* a new cession of land was obtained. But since 1821, some tribes having refused to dispose of more of their paternal inheritance on any terms whatever, the old policy of "*severest urgency and pressure*," (see Everett's Speech in the Senate, 1830) or of *liberty* and *threats*, (see Sprague's Speech, 1830) has been exchanged for actual violence and force. It is capable of the clearest proof, that our Indian troubles for the last half century, with all their retinue of blood, untold millions of National wealth, National shame, and of Heaven's wrath, have originated chiefly in Slavery. This requires new territory, and seeks the Indian lands; it is exposed to insurrection, and fears the presence of every possible auxiliary; its victim flies from suffering, hence refuge must be destroyed; it is itself injustice, and diminishes a sense of right. These troubles exist only in slave states.

This National Slave-Hunt has been in progress for nearly as long a period as was the American Revolution,—has cost the Nation half as much money, besides occasioning, by its expenditure, the present Extra Session of Congress, and an increased tariff. Gov. Call, who boasts the honor of the last blood-hound campaign, was appointed, by President Harrison, Governor of Florida, and the war is now raging with unprecedented barbarity. Mr. Giddings is Chairman of the Committee on Claims, and was well prepared to do his subject justice. Read his fair and masterly Speech, citizens of Maine;—see what destroys the peace, wealth, and honor of the Nation, and then, in the fear of the God of nations, resolve what you will DO for its extermination.

MR. GIDDINGS' SPEECH,

Upon a proposition of Mr. THOMPSON, of S. C., to appropriate "One Hundred Thousand Dollars for the removal, subsistence and benefit of such of the Seminole Chiefs and Warriors as may surrender for emigration."—[House of Representatives, Feb. 9, 1841.]

We take the liberty to abridge the introductory remarks of Mr. G. He expressed his strong desire to terminate this war. It had occupied the attention of the government, and efforts of the army for more than five years, at an expense of nearly forty millions of national treasure, and officers and soldiers had fallen its victims. But the *causes* of this war, of its *renewal* and *continuance*, had not been developed. This he thought it necessary to do in order to adopt appropriate means for its termination. He should also show its unconstitutional effects upon the *rights* and *interests* of the *free States*; but he should rely upon no principle that had not been asserted by the slave States, and by both political parties.

I have made these preliminary remarks in order that the Committee may the better understand what I intend to say hereafter: and having stated my premises, I will enter upon an investigation of the causes which led to the Florida War. Before I do this, however, I will take occasion to say, that the lands occupied by these Indians formed no inducement for us to enter upon this war. Gen. Jessup says, "*those lands would not pay for the medicines used by our troops while employed against the Indians.*" The Seminole Indians, by the treaty entered into at Payne's Landing, on the 9th of May, A. D. 1832, agreed to *emigrate West of the Mississippi upon certain conditions*. I shall not inquire whether those conditions were performed on our part, or whether the Indians were or were not morally bound to the observance of this stipulation. It is well known that they refused to emigrate, and that such refusal induced General Jackson to order the military force of the United States to Florida to *compel* them to emigrate. This attempted compulsion brought on the hostilities, which still continue. The important question now proposed, and which I intend to answer, is—*why did they refuse to emigrate?* The answer, however, may be found in Executive documents of the 24th Congress at its first session, (House doc. No. 171, p. 8. in an official letter of Wiley Thompson, Indian Agent, to William P. Duval, Governor of Florida, dated Jan. 1. 1834, nearly a year previous to the commencement of hostilities.) Speaking of the unwillingness

of the Indians to emigrate, Gen. Thompson says: "The *principal* causes which operate to cherish this feeling hostile to emigration are, first, the fear that their re-union with the Creeks, which will still subject them to the government and control of the Creek national council, will be a surrender of a large *negro property*, now held by those people, to the Creeks, as an antagonist claimant."

Thus, sir, we have official intelligence that the *principal cause* of the war, was the fear of losing this '*negro property*.' And we are led to inquire into the history of these conflicting claims to the '*negro property*' between the Creeks and the Seminoles.

In the letter above quoted, Gen. Thompson, speaking further on the subject says: "the Creek claim to negroes now in possession of the Seminole Indians, which is supposed to be the first cause of hostility to the emigration of the latter tribe, grows out of the treaty of 1821 between the U. S. and the former." We have now traced the original and principal cause of this war, as given by the Indian agent, to the treaty of Indian Spring, made on the 8th of Jan. 1821. This is the official report of an accredited officer of Government, who had long mingled in the councils of the Indians, and who was most familiar with their views, and whose word, I presume, was never doubted. I will now ask the attention of the committee for a moment, while I relate some of the historical facts that brought about this treaty in 1821.

We are all aware that Indians frequently commit trespasses upon the property of their white neighbors. In 1802, Congress passed a law by which the people of Georgia received pay for all such trespasses committed subsequently by the Creek Indians from the public treasure, and the amount thus paid was retained from the annuities or other monies due the Indians. By the treaty of 1821, an attempt was made to obtain for the people of Georgia, pay for slaves who had left their masters and taken up their residence with the Indians prior to 1802; and an agreement was obtained from them, consenting that the U. S. should pay to the people of Georgia the amount found due them for such losses prior to 1802, and retain the amount thus paid out of the money due the Indians for the lands sold to the U. States; provided the sum thus found due should not exceed \$250,000. The indemnity sought for the slaveholders of Georgia by this treaty was for losses sustained twenty years prior to the treaty and extending back an indefinite period.

Under this treaty the Creek Indians were compelled to pay for slaves that had left their masters forty or fifty years prior to the date of the treaty. Nor were they merely compelled to pay for slaves that lived or had taken up their residence with the Indians; but they were charged for the value of the slave when shown to have left his master without proof that he was with the Indians, or had any existence in their country. I speak on the authority of Mr. Wirt, late Attorney General, as expressed in Executive Document, No. 128, 1st session of 20th Congress. Nor were these abuses un-

accompanied with others of equally flagrant character. Mr. Wirt in the same communication assures the President that the price allowed for a slave was *two or three times their real value*. Yet, after paying for all the slaves that could be shown to have left their masters, at *two or three times their real value*, together with other property taken or destroyed by the Seminoles prior to 1802, it was found that the whole amounted to but \$101,000, leaving in the hands of Government \$149,000 belonging to the Indians. This money, however, was not returned to the Indians, but was retained by Government until 1834, when the owners of fugitive slaves petitioned Congress that it might be divided among them. This petition was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, and the chairman, and honorable member from Georgia, (Mr. Gilmer,) reported in favor of dividing the money among the owners of fugitive slaves as a compensation for the *offspring which the slaves would have borne had they remained in bondage*. This plan, which I think sets at defiance all Yankee calculations, was rejected by Congress. But a bill was subsequently introduced, providing for a division of this money among the owners of those slaves by way of *interest*, in direct violation of the treaty, and notwithstanding they had previously received two or three times the real value of their slaves; and this bill soon passed into a law. This was done in 1834. These slaves had united with the Seminoles or *runaways* in the peninsula of Florida, and the Creeks, (from whom the Seminoles had formerly separated,) having paid to the people of Georgia two or three times the value of those slaves, now claimed them as their property. The Creeks had mostly gone west of the Mississippi, and their agents were in Florida demanding these negroes of the Seminoles. The Seminoles, in the mean time, it is said, had intermarried with the negroes, and stood connected with them in all the relations of domestic life. If they emigrated West, their wives and children would be taken from them by the Creeks as slaves. If they remained in Florida, they must defend themselves against the army of the U. States. With them, it was *war* on one side, and *slavery* on the other. This state of things was entirely brought about by the efforts of our Government to obtain pay for the fugitive slaves of Georgia.

This interference of the Federal Government in behalf of slavery in Georgia, appears to have been the origin of our Florida difficulties.

[Mr. Walker of Georgia, called Mr. Giddings to order on the ground of irrelevancy.

The Chairman, Mr. Clifford of Maine, decided that the remarks of Mr. Giddings respecting the origin of the Florida war were in order; and Mr. G. proceeded.]

I think this interposition of our Federal Government, unconstitutional and improper, and will assign the reasons of that opinion.

[Mr. Habersham, of Georgia, called Mr. Giddings to order, and stated that the gentleman from Ohio had intimated his intention to offer an

amendment to the proposition before the House, and was proceeding to make a speech pretty freely interlarded with abolition, while this committee were yet uninformed as to the terms of the amendment he intended to offer.

The Chairman stated that the remarks of the gentleman from Ohio had reference to the proposition before the House, and were in order.

[Mr. Habersham desired to hear the amendment.]

Mr. Giddings resumed. I arose, Mr. Chairman, to discuss the Florida war, and I intend doing so, and can not be drawn off upon collateral points, nor frightened from it by the cry of *abolition*.

I will, however, say to the gentleman from Georgia, that I have not said, nor do I intend saying, one word upon the subject of *abolition*, although I may perhaps touch upon the doctrine of *State rights and strict construction*.

I hold that if the slaves of Georgia or any other State, leave their masters, the Federal Government has no constitutional authority to employ our army or navy for their recapture, or to apply the national treasure to repurchase them. We possess no constitutional power to do either. If, however, gentlemen of the South, who hold to a strict and rigid construction of that instrument, will point me to the clause of our constitution containing such authority, I will confess my obligations to them. Such power would necessarily include the power to tax the free States to an indefinite extent for the support of slaves, and for arresting every fugitive slave who has fled from his master, within the several States in this Union. Such power I deny most distinctly and emphatically. But, sir, we have as much right to do this *directly*, as we have to do it *indirectly*. We have as much power to employ our army and navy in recapturing fugitive slaves as we have to make a treaty with the Indians to retake such fugitives, and then employ our army and navy to compel the Indians to do it. We have as much power to tax the free States, and apply the money *directly* for the purchase of fugitive slaves, as we have to tax them to carry on a war for the purpose of compelling the surrender of such slaves; or even to apply the national treasure to the holding of such treaties. In truth, sir, we have no power *whatever* over the subject or institution of slavery *within* the several States of this Union. We have neither the power to *sustain* or *abolish* it, to *create* or *destroy* it. I mean, sir, that we have no such powers delegated to us for *any purpose whatever*. We have not the power to sustain it in the South, or establish it in the North. I know it is said, and repeated, and asserted, that a portion of the people of the free States hold that we have the power to *abolish slavery in the States*. I can only say that I never met with any intelligent man who has advanced such doctrine in my hearing. For my own part, I believe we have as much power to *establish slavery in the free States, as we have to abolish it in the slave States*. I say nothing of the constitutional power of Congress over the *slave trade between the States*. But, Mr. Chairman, I am not willing to believe

that any gentleman on this floor will urge the right of taxing the freemen of the North for the holding in slavery the colored men at the South.

But, sir, I wish further to look into this power, or rather the want of power, in Congress over slavery within the States of this Union. In Dec. A. D. 1838, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. Atherton) introduced to this House, a resolution expressing the sense of the House in regard to this power.

It read as follows:

"Resolved, That this Government is a Government of limited powers: that by the Constitution of the United States, it has no power WHATEVER over the institution of slavery in the several States of this Union."

This resolution received the almost unanimous support of this House. There were 198 votes in favor of it and but 6 against it. I voted for it myself, because I deemed it correct. Every member from the slave States voted for it. I shall be slow to suspect that any of those gentlemen will now change their position, and say that we have no power to *sustain* slavery; and that in voting for the resolution they only intended to say that we have no power *whatever* over the subject to *abolish* it. I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that the Federal Government has at times interposed its influence to obtain for the citizens of slave States, compensation for slaves taken by Indian tribes and by Great Britain. But this last fact furnishes no argument against the position I have assumed. The cases alluded to were merely the acts of the Executive, interposed by common consent, without discussion or objection, for the purpose of obtaining from such tribe or Government, a compensation which we have uniformly refused when demanded of ourselves; for I believe it is well understood, that we have never in any instance paid the owner for the loss of a slave, even when such slave was pressed into the public services, and killed while thus in the employ of Government. The Florida war, having its origin in attempts on the part of the Federal Government to sustain slavery in one of the States of this Union, is so far unconstitutional, and is directly opposed to the doctrine contained in the resolution above quoted, which received the unanimous support of the slave States.

And now, having called the attention of the committee to the *remote and principal* cause of this war, I will ask their attention to some of the proximate and immediate causes. On the 21st of May, 1836, this House adopted a resolution calling upon the then President for "information respecting the causes of the Florida war." On the 2d of June, the President transmitted to the House sundry papers relating to that subject, among which may be found an address or petition of nearly one hundred gentlemen, said to be among the inhabitants of Florida, calling on the President to interpose the power of the General Government for the purpose of securing them in the possession of their slaves. These gentlemen, speaking of the Seminole Indians, say:

"While these indomitable people continue where they now are, the owners of slaves in our Territory, and even in the States contiguous, can not for a moment, in anything like security, enjoy this kind of property."

This was a plain, direct and palpable request for the President to interpose the strong arm of the nation in behalf of slavery. Nor did the President remain deaf to such request: but he immediately indorsed an order on the back of the petition, directing the Secretary of War to make inquiry, and, if the charges were found true, "to direct the Indians to prepare *forthwith* to remove West of the Mississippi." Soon after this, the treaty of Payne's Landing, having remained nearly two years unnoticed by the President, was sent to the Senate for their sanction: and every preparation was made to compel the Indians, by physical force, to remove west of the Mississippi. A correspondence was carried on with the officers of our army; and all the military force that could well be brought to Florida, was concentrated there, for the purpose of compelling the Indians, at the point of the bayonet, to emigrate. This was done without even laying the subject before Congress, or asking for any legislative sanction.

It is not my intention to enlarge upon this point, or to comment upon this very extraordinary interposition of Executive influence in favor of slavery, without constitutional sanction. Neither have I time to comment upon the manner in which the treaty of Payne's Landing was obtained from the Indians; nor upon the extraordinary terms of that treaty; nor upon the still more extraordinary method of enforcing the Indians to an observance of the compact by the use of the bayonet, without consulting the legislative authority, in defiance of justice, and without precedent. But I desire to examine into the causes of this war, and discover how far it has had its origin in attempts by the Executive to support slavery at the national expense, and in violation of the rights of the free States. In doing this, I shall speak from no vague conjecture, or uncertain suspicion, but what I say shall be "*from the book*;" from documentary evidence and official report.

The address to which I have called the attention of the committee, estimates the number of Seminole Indians at that time at more than five hundred; and they declare it as their belief that four fifths of them are fugitive slaves. On the 20th Jan., 1834, Gov. Duval, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, says:

"The slaves belonging to the Indians have a controlling influ-

* An Alabama paper says: "It is the power to entice away and instruct in *bush-fighting* so many of our slaves, that we would wish to annihilate.— These Seminoles cannot remain in the Peninsula of Florida without threatening the internal safety of the South." The New Orleans Courier of July 27, 1839, remarks: "Every year's delay in subduing the Seminoles, increases the danger of a rising among the serviles."

ence over the minds of their masters, and are entirely opposed to any change of residence. It will be best at once to adopt firm and decided measures; such as will demonstrate to the Indians that it is the determination of Government to see the treaty justly and fairly executed. This can not be done until the bands of out-laws (fugitive slaves) mentioned in the agent's report, are arrested and broken up; for so long as they are permitted to remain, every Indian that is unwilling to emigrate will seek their protection."

No man, perhaps, possessed better knowledge of these facts than Gov. Duval, who assures us that the negroes controlled the Indians, and that the Indians sought the protection and support of the fugitive slaves. He further assures us that nothing could be done while those fugitive slaves were permitted to remain in Florida. If gentlemen will bear this advice in mind, they will better understand the policy that subsequently guided our army against the Indians.

In a letter dated Jan. 26, 1831, Gov. Duval says: "*The slaves belonging to the Indians must be made to fear for themselves before they will cease to influence the minds of their masters.*" "You may be assured (says he) that the first step towards the emigration of these Indians must be the breaking up of the runaway slaves and the out-law Indians." Thus we are informed that the war must be first waged against the *fugitive slaves*. Perhaps I ought to explain that slavery among the Indians is very different from what it is among the whites. It is comparative independence. Hence the slaves of the Indians have a perfect horror of slavery among the white people. Of course the fugitive slaves and the Indians slaves become intimate friends, and act in concert for the liberty of all.

[Mr. Campbell of South Carolina, called Mr. Giddings to order.

The Chairman said that the gentleman from Ohio is in order.]

Mr. Giddings resumed. I will assure the gentleman from South Carolina, that I shall only allude to the subject of slavery so far as it stands connected with the Florida war. That so far as it has been the means of drawing forty millions of dollars from the public Treasury, and most of it from the free States, I intend to assail it, and no further. Gov. Duval says "these slaves must first be made to fear for themselves." The war was first to be waged against *slaves*, for the reason that they influenced the minds of their masters in favor of *liberty*. In other words, the war must be directed against the rights of a slave to express his mind to his Indian master on the subject of *human rights*. Sir, these slaves were made to fear for themselves in pursuance of these intimations of Governor Duval, as I will now endeavor to show this committee.

On the 28th Oct. 1831, Gen. Thompson in a letter addressed to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, says: "There are many very likely negroes in this nation, (Seminole.) Some of the whites in the adjacent settlements manifest a restless desire to obtain them, and I have no doubt that Indian raised negroes are now in possession of

the whites." Thus, sir, it seems that *kidnapping was not* unknown in that country. This same General Thompson, the accredited officer of this Government, on the 9th of January, 1835, advises Government "that an expedition should be sent on foot for the double purpose of driving the Indians within their boundary and *capture negroes, many of whom it is believed are runaway slaves.*" And, sir, our army was put in motion to *capture negroes and slaves*, as we shall find in the sequel. But I wish to call the attention of the committee for a few moments to the manner in which these slaves, in the words of Governor Duval, were "*made to fear for themselves.*" On the 23th of July, 1835, John Walker, one of the Appalachicola chiefs belonging to the Seminole band, wrote Gen. Thompson, Indian agent, as follows: "I am (says he) induced to write you in consequence of the depredations making, and attempted to be made upon my property, by a company of negro stealers, some of whom are from Columbus, Georgia, and have connected themselves with Brown and Douglass. I should like your advice how I am to act. I dislike to make any trouble or to have any difficulty with any of the white people. But if they trespass upon my premises and my rights, I must defend myself the best way I can. If they do make this attempt, and I have no doubt they will, they must bear the consequences. *But is there no civil law to protect me?* Are the *free negroes* and the negroes belonging to this town to be stolen away publicly, and, in the face of law and justice, carried off and sold to fill the pockets of these *worse than land pirates?* Douglass and his company hired a man who has two large *trained dogs* for the purpose to come down and take Billey. He is from Mobile, and follows for a livelihood catching runaway negroes."

This, sir, is the language of a savage addressed to his civilized neighbors. He called in vain for protection. A few days after the date of the letter he was robbed of all his negroes: so says the report of the United States Attorney, addressed to the Secretary of War, and dated April 21, 1836. But of the number of *freemen* kidnapped at the same time, we are not informed. At all events, "*the slaves were made to fear for themselves,*" as Governor Duval advised. Can we wonder that these Indians were driven to acts of desperation.

Here, sir, is the first mention I have met of the use of "bloodhounds" in this Florida war. They were used by "negro stealers," for the purpose of catching the colored people of Florida and our officers have copied the example. But I intend giving further examples of the use of bloodhounds before I close. I have, however, no time for comment. My object is to place *facts* before the people of this nation, and let every man make his own comments, and draw his own conclusions. I will give one more example of the mode of reaching "slaves to fear for themselves." E-con-chattimico was also an Indian chief of the Seminole band, living upon the Appalachicola river, and was perhaps one who signed the treaty at Camp

Moultrie in 1832, by which we solemnly pledged the faith of this nation to protect the Indians in the enjoyment of their lives and property. This chief is said to have owned twenty slaves, valued at \$15,000. These 'negro stealers' were seen hovering around his plantation, and their object could not be misunderstood. By the advice of the sub-agent he armed himself and people for the purpose of defending themselves. When the negro stealers learned that E-con-chattimico's people had armed themselves in defence of their *liberty*, (for they considered Indian slavery liberty, compared with white slavery,) and they raised a report—that the Indians had armed themselves for the purpose of uniting with the hostile Seminoles, and murdering the white people. On learning this, E-con-chattimico at once delivered up his arms to the white people, and threw himself upon their protection. Disarmed and unable to defend his people, they were immediately kidnapped, taken off, and sold into interminable bondage. E-con-chattimico now calls on us to pay him for the loss he has sustained in the violation of our treaty, in which we solemnly covenanted to protect him and his property.—Robbed, abused, insulted, and deceived, he emigrated to the West and now looks to us for a redress of the wrongs he has sustained. I give the substance of his statement, as related by him in his petition and communicated by General Thompson, Governor Duval, and the district attorney of East Florida, and sworn to by several witnesses.

But, sir, this transaction, and others equally abusive, were soon known throughout Florida. The Indians and negroes were thus admonished of the necessity of uniting their efforts and energies in defence of their liberty and lives. Governor Duval, speaking of this transaction, in a letter to the Secretary of War, dated the 23d May, says "it was an outrage well calculated to rouse the Indians to hostility." These are the acts that have led us on, step by step, until we have found ourselves in the midst of a most disastrous war.

The men who committed these robberies, and kidnapped these negroes, were well known, for the acts were committed in open day; their names and places of residence are distinctly mentioned; but I have yet to learn that any one of them, has been punished in any manner for this warfare against the liberty of the blacks and the rights of the Indians. Indeed, it seems to have been an object with some of the officers employed in Florida, to induce Government itself to enter into the business of *capturing and selling slaves*. J. W. Harris, disbursing agent of the Government, in a letter to the Commissary General of Subsistence, dated Dec. 30, 1836, says: "I would respectfully suggest that you recommend to the Hon. Secretary of War that annuity due to the hostile Indians be retained to defray the expenses of this war; *and that the slaves who shall be captured, whom I believe have been active instigators to our present troubles, be sold at public sale, and the proceeds appropri-*

ated to the same object." This is the first official proposition that has come to my knowledge, for the Government to enter into competition with the "*negro stealers*," by capturing and selling slaves. At the time this suggestion was made, we were engaged in open war with these people, who had sought liberty in the wilds of Florida. If they were captured they would be *prisoners of war*; and for us to sell them as slaves, would be as much a violation of national honor as it would have been for them to have sold as slaves, such of our people as they were able to capture.

I may perhaps be permitted to remark that, among the people of the free states, nothing is regarded with so much disgust and abhorrence as the buying and selling men, women, and children, and that this feeling is common among all classes and all political parties.

Mr. Chairman, I have called the attention of the committee to what is officially announced as the first and principal cause of this war, and also to some of the proximate and immediate causes.— I think no man can doubt that it originated in the attempts of the Executive to support slavery by the influence and efforts of our national Government, in violation as I think, of the Constitution. I propose to investigate the subject a little further, and to examine into the cause that led to its *renewal and continuance*.

On the 6th of March, 1837, General Jessup entered into a conventional arrangement with the Seminole Indians, by which it was agreed that hostilities should immediately cease; that the Indians should emigrate west of the Mississippi; that they should be secure in their lives and property; and "that negroes, their bona fide property," should accompany them. By the terms of this compact, no negroes were included except those who were called the "bona fide property" of the Indians, although Gov. Duval, Gen. Jessup and the Indian agent, all unite in saying the Indians were controlled by the blacks.— These blacks comprised both fugitive slaves and free people of color, who were connected with the Indians by marriage and consanguinity. The attempt to separate them appeared to me to have been hopeless.

The Indian who had married a fugitive slave and reared a family of children, would not in my opinion, quietly fold his arms and view his offspring and their mother marched off into interminable slavery, while he himself should go west. Nor do I believe that will ever be done. They are all the enemies of our country, fighting in arms against us. They have already cost us much treasure and the blood of many freemen. If they will now surrender themselves "*prisoners of war*," I would send them all west together. No person can doubt our perfect right to do so; and I think justice to the nation and to the Indians requires it; and my amendment will be to that effect. General Jessup's attempts to separate them failed, and I believe all further attempts of that kind will fail.

This compact between Gen. Jessup and the Indians bears date on

the 6th March. On the 18th of the same month a solemn remonstrance against this arrangement was signed by a number of gentlemen of high standing in Florida, and transmitted to the Secretary of War. These gentlemen totally objected to any pacification that did not provide for the re-capture of their fugitive slaves. They objected to the Indians going west until they should take and return to their owners the slaves who had escaped from their masters in Florida. The remonstrances may be found at 55th page of executive document of the House of Representatives, No. 225, of the 3d session of the 25th Congress. It is an interesting paper, but of too great length for me to read at this time. It shows in a most clear and palpable light, the views entertained by those gentlemen in regard to the cause and objects of the war. Whatever others may have thought upon that subject, it is clear that they supposed the war to have been commenced and carried on for the purpose of aiding them in holding their slaves, and they declare it incompatible with the honor and dignity of the nation to permit the Indians to emigrate until they shall bring the slaves back to their owners. I have no doubt they felt that they were correct in their views; nor do I believe they entertained a doubt of the justice and propriety of taxing the free States to any extent in support of slavery. There was, however, a cessation of hostilities, notwithstanding these remonstrances. The Indians ceased for a time to plunder the defenceless families of Florida; but still the fugitive slaves remained yet hidden in the swamps and everglades of that untraversed country. Peace on such terms appears to have been unacceptable to the people of Florida. I will not speak the conclusions of my own mind, however, on this subject but will give you the words of a high officer of Government, who was on the spot, and who spoke from positive knowledge. I refer to Gen. Jessup, who in a letter dated 29th March, 1837, and directed to Col. John Warren, speaking of the anxiety of the Indians to maintain the peace agreed upon, says: "*There is no disposition on the part of the great body of the Indians to renew hostilities, and they will, I am sure, faithfully fulfil their engagements, if the inhabitants of the territory be prudent. But any attempt to seize the negroes or other property would be followed by an immediate resort to arms.*"

Thus we have the authority of General Jessup for saying that the Indians *were anxious to maintain peace*. That he was at the same time apprehensive that the people would attempt to seize the Indian negroes. What reason General Jessup had to suspect that the people of Florida would be otherwise than prudent, or what reason he had to fear that they would seize the Indian negroes, I know not.—He certainly exhibited fears upon the subject. For on the 5th of April we find that he issued a general order in the following words:

"The Commanding General has reason to believe that the interference of unprincipled white men with the negro property of the Seminole Indians, if not immediately checked, will prevent their emigration, and lead to a renewal of hostilities."

The order goes on to prohibit any person not connected with the public service from entering on the territory assigned to the Indians. In this order we have official intelligence that the whites did in fact interfere with the Indian slaves, or in other words, they began to rob the Indians of their slaves almost as soon as hostilities ceased. As to the outrages committed upon the free blacks during the suspension of hostilities we have no information in this order, and are left to infer the course pursued towards them from the evidence I have previously given. If these people were sufficiently rapacious to rob the Indians of their negroes under such circumstances, it is easy to form an opinion as to the safety of the free colored people found with the Indians. How many of them, if any, were made slaves we know not. On the 18th April, twelve days after the date of his letter to Colonel Warren, General Jessup wrote to Governor Call, saying: "If the citizens of the Territory be *prudent*, the war may be considered at an end. But any attempts to interfere with the *Indian negroes* would cause an immediate resort to hostilities. The negroes control their masters, and they have heard of the act of your legislative council.* Thirty or more of the Indian negro men were at and near my camp on the Withlacoochie late in March. But the arrival of two or three citizens of Florida, said to be in search of negroes, caused them to disperse at once, and I doubt whether they will come in again. At all events, the emigration will be delayed a month I apprehend in consequence of the alarm of these negroes."

The embarrassment into which General Jessup was thrown is quite apparent, notwithstanding his order on the 5th April. The people were anxious to hunt for slaves. The negroes it would seem were under constant apprehension, and fled when a slave catcher came into their vicinity. Between the Indians and our army, it appears, there was no difficulty whatever. But the difficulty appears to have been with the Indians and negroes on one side, and those who sought to rob the Indians and enslave the blacks on the other. It is also quite evident that some of the people of Florida were restless under the order of the 5th April, prohibiting them from entering the Indian country. When intelligence respecting that order reached St. Augustine, it seems a public meeting was called, and a committee appointed to procure its repeal, in order that the white people might enter the Indian country for the purpose of seizing slaves.

The committee, said to be composed of men of high standing, addressed a long letter to Gen. Jessup, in which they say, speaking of the people of Florida: "While they believe that the accomplishment of a certain pacification must, as it ought, be an object of primary importance in these negotiations, they persuaded themselves that the preservation of the negro property belonging to the inhabi-

* If "negroes" have had the *controlling* influence in carrying on the Florida War, with such wonderful ability and perseverance on their part, it would seem that they could "take care of themselves."

tants of this desolated country, must be seen by him to be an object of scarcely less moment." It is a most undeniable fact, borne out by every part of these official documents, that the people of Florida supposed that the great object of the war was to aid the slaveholders in capturing and recovering their slaves. This same protest goes on to recount facts in regard to their slaves having run away, and finding a place of refuge in the Indian country, and the concluding of an armistice by General Jessup, without getting their slaves back, and then the signers add: "Against such a course, a course so destructive of their rights and interests, the citizens of St. Augustine, and others, in public meeting assembled for themselves, and on behalf of the people of East Florida generally, do solemnly protest." This, sir, is the solemn protest of the citizens of Florida against any cessation of hostilities upon other terms than of getting back their slaves, or rather of permitting them to enter the Indian country to obtain their slaves. The horror with which the negroes, both Indian slaves and free blacks, regarded those who came within their territory for the purpose of catching slaves, is shown by the letter of General Jessup just quoted; in which he states that thirty Indian negroes, in and about his camp, at once ran away when they heard that two men were there in quest of slaves.

With these people, the great, important, and absorbing subject appears to have been *slaves*, not *peace*. Indeed, we have their solemn protest against extinguishing the flames of war, or stopping the torrent of blood which had so long flowed, until they should have their slaves secured to them. They were unwilling that the treasure of the country should cease to be poured out until they should have their fellow men brought back into bondage. But, sir, I should fatigue the committee too much were I to refer to a tenth part of the documentary evidence which I have before me on this subject, or to that part which goes to prove the attempts of our Government officers to get back the slaves who had escaped from their masters; or the manner in which that subject entered into the plans of the War department. Nor have I time to give any considerable portion of the evidence showing how this object of capturing slaves and supporting slavery entered into the designs, and was carried in the movements of the army. The time which may reasonably be claimed by me will only permit me to glance at the subject, and to lay before this committee and the people of this nation a small portion of the facts which I wish I was able to present them. It will be sufficient in this place to remark, that immediately after these protestations against peace—these official communications showing that the Indians had no desire to renew the war, and that the only danger to be apprehended was the unlawful interference by the people of Florida with the Indian negroes, the flames of war were again lighted up; our troops were again put in motion; the Treasury of our nation was again placed under contribution: and the blood of defenceless women and helpless children again flowed, in order, as it

appears, that slaveholders might recover their slaves. I speak, sir from *official documentary evidence*. These facts, and those which I intend to refer to are on record in the archives of our nation, and will descend in all coming time to give character to this unholy war.

It would appear, from a perusal of the documents before me, that General Jessup was unable to fulfil his covenant with the Indians, to protect them, and the negroes connected with them; but on this point we have no direct evidence. Certain it is he was unable to bring the negroes to terms of submission. I use the term *negroes*, because he says, officially, that "*the negroes controlled the Indians.*" Being unable to subdue the enemy, his troops falling a prey to the unhealthy climate in which he was situated, the citizens being murdered, their habitations burned, and his army discouraged, he issued the order No. 160, to which I will now call the attention of the committee. That part to which I particularly refer is in the following words: "*All Indian property captured from this date will belong to the corps or detachment making it.*" The sense in which the term *property* was used in this order is fully explained in a letter of General Jessup to Colonel Warren, dated a few days subsequent, in which, speaking of the Seminoles, he says; "*Their negroes, cattle and horses, will belong to the corps by which they are captured.*" This order bears date on the 3d of August, 1837, and may be found at page 4 of the documents communicated to this House by the Secretary of War on the 27th day of February, 1839. I think that history will record this as the first general order issued by the commander of an American army in which the catching of slaves is held out as an incentive to military duty. I mention this fact and bring it to the consideration of the committee with feelings of deep mortification. As an American, I feel humbled at this act, which cannot be viewed by the civilized world otherwise than dishonorable to our arms and nation. That this officer, entrusted with the command of our army and the honor of our flag, should appeal to the cupidity, the desire of plunder, and the worst of human passions, in order to stimulate his men to effort, is, I think, to be regretted by men of all parties, in all sections of our country. Our national flag, which floated in proud triumph at Saratoga, which was enveloped in a blaze of glory at Monmouth and Yorktown, seems to have been prostituted in Florida to the base purpose of leading an organized company of 'negro catchers.' Sir, no longer is 'our country' the battle cry of our army in their advance to victory; but *slaves* has become the watchword to inspire them to effort. No longer does the war-worn veteran, amid the battle's rage think of his country's glory, and nerve his arm in behalf of freedom; but with eagle eyes he watches the wavering ranks of the enemy, and as the smoke rises from the battle-field, he plunges amid their fleeing cohorts to seize upon the sable foe, that he may make him his future slave.

The Nation dealing in slaves.

But I intend to pursue this subject further. I shall now show that this Government—this nation, composed of twenty-six States, some holding slaves and some denying the right of man to hold his fellow man in slavery—has been made to *deal in slaves*; to become the *owner* of slaves; that this administration, now just going out of power, has dealt in “human flesh;” that the funds of Government, drawn from the pockets of free laborers, have been paid for the capture of fugitive slaves, and the purchase of slaves captured from the Seminole Indians. And for that purpose, I refer to order No. 175, dated at Tampa Bay, Sept. 6, 1837. It reads as follows:

“1. The Seminole negroes captured by the army will be taken on ACCOUNT OF GOVERNMENT, AND HELD SUBJECT TO THE ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

“2. The sum of eight thousand dollars will be paid to the Creek chiefs and warriors, by whom they were captured, or who were present at the capture, in full for their claim to them.

“3. To induce the Creek Indians to take alive, and not destroy the negroes or citizens who had been captured by the Seminoles, a reward was promised them for all they should secure. They captured and secured thirty-five, who have been returned to their owners. The owners have paid nothing, but the promise to the Indians must be fulfilled. The sum of twenty dollars will be allowed to them for each from the public funds.

“4. Lieutenant Searle is charged with the execution of this order.”

This order, taking the negroes on “account of Government,” bears date on the 6th September. From that time they were to be “held subject to the order of the Secretary of War.” On the 7th October this order of Gen. Jessup was approved by the honorable Secretary of War, and may be seen by reference to page 43 of the document just quoted. Thus, sir, we have official documentary evidence that the people of this nation, in their national capacity, became the “purchasers of human beings.” The money of our people, of the freemen of this nation, was paid for the purchase of *slaves*.

This fund, most of it collected in the free States, and coming from the hard earnings of *freewhites*, was appropriated for the purchase of Indian slaves, and of those who had sought freedom amid the swamps and everglades of Florida; while our most vital interests at the North are abandoned, and even the implements necessary to carry on our harbor improvements have been sold, and the money thus obtained placed in the common fund, and, perhaps, paid for the purchase of these fugitive slaves was justifiable and correct. I may differ with gentlemen as to the justice or honor of that proceeding; but I cannot enter into that subject at this time. I would merely say, if the slaveholders wish to have their slaves repurchased, I desire them to furnish the funds, Mr. Chairman, and not thrust their hands into the pockets of your constituents and mine to obtain the money to pay for them.

[Mr. Black, of Georgia, desired to be informed whether the member from Ohio alluded to the citizens of Georgia?]

Mr. Giddings resumed. I deny a right of members to interrupt me for the purpose of inquiring whether I allude to *them*, or to their constituents. If the garment does not fit them, why do they attempt to force it on? I alluded to the fact, that money is, and has been, collected in the free States, and used to buy up the fugitive slaves of the South, while our most important interests at the North are abandoned.

I see gentlemen here who are tremulously sensitive if the word *tariff* or *harbor*, or *manufacture* is but *mentioned*; and I should like to compare the benefits to the nation, arising from the forty millions expended in the Florida war, with the benefits of the thirteen millions expended throughout the United States for harbor purposes; but I have not time to do it now.

I was speaking upon the subject of retaking fugitive slaves; and I think it due to the people of the nation that they should be informed of the assiduous manner in which our troops pursued the business of catching slaves.

In a letter, dated at Tampa Bay, 25th May, 1837, directed to Lt. Col. Harney, Gen. Jessup says: "If you see Powel (Occola) tell him I shall send out and take all the negroes who belong to the white people. And he must not allow the Indian negroes to mix with them. Tell him I am sending to Cuba for bloodhounds to trail them; and I intend to hang every one of them who does not come in."

If the negroes, who appear to have controlled the Indians, had quietly suffered themselves to be trailed with bloodhounds, or to be hanged for their love of liberty, they would have well deserved to be slaves. Another important piece of intelligence we have here also. The expenditure of \$5,000 for bloodhounds in Cuba, was not, as has been supposed, for the purpose of trailing Indians. In this letter we have it officially announced, that they were sent for and obtained for the purpose of catching fugitive slaves. I desire the people of this nation to understand distinctly that they are taxed for the purpose of maintaining and supporting slavery in the slave States; that their treasure has been appropriated directly and publicly to that purpose; that our army—many of whose officers and soldiers were bred in the free States, and in the love of liberty—have been employed, by order of the Commanding General, in pursuing and capturing fugitive slaves. Nor is that all. The freemen of the North are taxed for the purpose of buying bloodhounds to act in concert with our army, in this degrading warfare.

The taking of fugitive slaves is regarded, by northern people, as a most ignominious employment; so much so, that scarcely a man can be found who will do it publicly. Yet it seems that our military officers in Florida were openly engaged in it.

I will now call the attention of this committee to that portion of Gen. Jessup's order which fastens upon the people of this nation the character of slaveholders, and the "purchasers of slaves;" by which this nation, boasting of its liberty and its regard for equal rights, became a trader in human flesh. I refer to that portion of the order which declares the slaves to be taken on account of Govern-

ment, and held subject to the order of the Secretary of War." On the 24th of Sept., 1838, Gen. Jessup wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, saying, "The Seminole negroes are now all the property of the public. I have promised Abraham the freedom of his family if he proved faithful to us: and I shall certainly hang him if he be not faithful."

Mr. Chairman, I think the people of my district will be slow to admit that Gen. Jessup possessed the constitutional power, or right to make them slaveholders. Some of them, I am sure, will disclaim all title to these slaves, and like Gen. Taylor, will refuse to have any concern or connection with this transaction. They will, I am confident, deny the right of Gen. Jessup, or of the honorable Secretary of War, to pay their money for the purchase of slaves. Nor do I believe they will admit the justice or honor of selling the freedom of a man's family for the purchase of his fidelity, as promised by General Jessup to Abraham. If I understand the letter referred to, this Abraham was taken into the service of Government, for the purpose of acting as a pilot to lead our men to the habitations of other blacks, for the purpose of capturing more slaves and Indians. If he proved faithful to our troops and a traitor to his own kindred and friends, then his wife and children—the objects of his affection—were to have their freedom: but if he refused to betray his own people, he was to be hanged, and his family enslaved. Sir, I know not how other gentlemen view this transaction, but I am free to declare that it does not comport with my own views of honor or justice.

But, sir, where are those slaves? Are they set at liberty, or have they been sold into slavery? The purchase was certainly a very extraordinary transaction, and one that will excite inquiry. The slaves remained at Fort Pike for many months. And, if I had time, I would read to the committee a curious correspondence respecting their being employed in such a manner as to *earn their living*, and the like; but I will not detain the committee for that purpose.

The manner in which they were to be finally disposed of seems to have created some uneasiness with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In a letter addressed to the acting Secretary of War, dated May 1, 1838, speaking of the purchase of these slaves, he says: "I would respectfully suggest whether there are not other objections to the purchase of these negroes by the U. S. It seems to me that a proposition to Congress, to appropriate money to pay for them, and their transportation to Africa, could its authority for that course be obtained, or for any other disposition of them, *would occasion great and extensive excitement*. Such a relation assumed by the U. S., for however laudable an object, would, it appears, place the country in no *enviable attitude*, especially at this juncture, when the public mind here and elsewhere, is so sensitive upon the subject of slavery." Sir, I fully agree with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. This purchase of slaves by Gen. Jessup, and sanctioned by the honorable Secretary of War, has placed the country in no *enviable attitude*; it has tarnished our national honor, and deeply wounded the feelings of the North. But this suggestion, as to the proprie-

ty of the purchase, was made on the 1st of May, 1838, and, on the 24th Sept. previous, Gen. Jessup, writing Capt. B. L. Bonneville, commanding the Choctaw warriors, says: "In addition to their pay as soldiers, they will have all the Seminole property they capture. And those indians are rich in horses and negroes. The Creek warriors *received* between \$14,000 and \$15,000 for their captures." Yet it seems that, some eight months after the date of this letter, showing that the Creeks had then *received* their pay, the propriety of the purchase was doubted. I think, however, that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had good reason to suppose that some excitement might arise from this transaction, by which you and I, and our constituents, as a portion of the people of this nation, became "*slaveholders*," and purchasers of our fellow men.

At page 74 of the document last cited, is a list of these Seminole negroes who were sent to Tampa Bay, after being received as "public property," by order of Gen. Jessup, at the price of \$3,000. The list contains the name, age, sex, and description of each person; but as it is of great length I beg leave to give an extract only. It is in the following form:

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Age.</i>	<i>Sex.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Ben,	5 years,	Male,	Son of Elsy.
Molly,	3 years,	Female,	Daughter of Elsy.
Judy,	1 year,	Female,	Daughter of Elsy.

This short extract contains the names of three children, apparently of one family, and all less than six years of age. These children were purchased by our officers as "public property." Sir, what do our people of the free states, or of the civilized world, think of this kind of "*Government chattels*?" I have no doubt that many a northern lady will inquire for the mother of those children? This question, I cannot answer. I find in the list the name of Elsy, aged twenty years, said to be the daughter of *Fanny*. I should judge that she was not the mother of the children; but such may be the case. I am led to believe that both father and mother escaped the fangs of the *bloodhounds and slave-catchers*.

But the question recurs where are those slaves? I have, for more than a month, had a resolution lying in my drawer, calling on the Secretary of War for information respecting them; but to this hour I have had no opportunity of offering it in the regular course of business, and I felt no hopes of success by offering it at any other time. It may not have been observed by many members, that in the last session of the late Congress, a petition was presented to this House from a Mr. Watson, in which he states that, in May, 1837 he purchased these same negroes, captured by the Creek warriors, of their agent, and paid for them \$14,600, and he gives pretty good evidence to sustain his statement. This occurred in May, '38, while the order of General Jessup receiving them as public property was in September previous; and the confirmation of that order was on the 7th of October, prior to the time of Watson's *apparent* purchase. General Jessup's letter to Col. Warren, saying that these *warriors* had received between \$14,000 and \$15,000, bears

date on the 17th of October, prior to Watson's supposed purchase. It will be borne in mind that these are official documents, transmitted at the time of their dates. There is also a curious coincidence in regard to *price*. Gen. Jessup said in October, 1837, that these warriors had then received "between *fourteen and fifteen thousand dollars*." And Watson says, and gives good evidence to prove, that he paid to these same warriors \$14,600, in May following.—Now, if these Indians got twice paid for those slaves, they were more fortunate in slave trading than they ever were in any other transaction with the white people. Another singular circumstance I will mention. On the 1st of May, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs suggested to the Secretary of War, that for the United States to assume the relation of slaveholders, might create extensive excitement, particularly as the public mind here and elsewhere was so sensitive on the subject of slavery; while Watson's bill of sale bears date only eight days afterwards. On the 9th of May, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs requests of the Secretary of War an order for the officer at Fort Pike to deliver these negroes to N. F. Collins, agent for the Creek warriors: while, from other communications, one would think that the United States never had owned the negroes, although they were taken into possession of our troops on the sixth of September, 1837, and kept at the public expense until, and long after, the supposed purchase by Watson.

Sir, this transaction is shrouded in mystery. I have read to the committee a portion of its history; but the whole I think is not communicated by the documents before us. I have an opinion, and I express it as an opinion, founded on official papers, it is true, but it is nevertheless the conclusion of my own mind in regard to the matter. I then suppose that after the purchase of Gen. Jessup, on the 6th of September, and the sanction by the Secretary of War, on the 7th of October, 1837, and after keeping these negroes at the expense of the public for eight months, and transporting them to Fort Pike, the honorable Secretary began to entertain doubts whether the public would justify the transaction. He probably felt that my friend here from Vermont, (Mr. Slade,) or the gentleman from N. Y., over the way, (Mr. Gates,) might not remain entirely silent, "*when*" (to use the words of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs) "the public mind here and elsewhere is so sensitive upon the *subject of slavery*;" especially as it was ascertained that there must be an appropriation of money by Congress for the funds that would seem to have been paid long previously. Difficulties appear to have beset him on every side; and I think his feelings were well expressed in a letter to Gen. Arbuckle, dated July 21st 1838, in which, speaking of this transaction, he says, in very emphatic language, "the whole affair is a *delicate* and difficult one." Just at this time, Mr. Watson, being at this city, was, it appears from his statements, persuaded by the officers of Government to purchase the negroes, being fully assured that the Indian title was good and valid. The contract was accordingly made, as it appears, with the agent of the Creek warriors, by which he, Watson, paid the \$14,600, and relieved the hon-

orable Secretary from his embarrassment, and the nation from the purchase made by Gen. Jessup. The purchase was effected in "*this market*," with the approbation of the high officers of State, and in the midst of a *Christian* community. Now, Sir, in order that I may be understood, I will leave the purchase and sale of the slaves, and ask the patience of the committee while I relate the brief story of their travels and peregrinations. They were sent from Florida immediately after the order of the 6th of September, 1837, to Fort Pike near New Orleans. Here some sixty of them were detained by a pretended claim, by persons living in Georgia, who insisted that this "public property" was their own proper goods and chattels; while Gen. Gaines, who appeared better versed in the law of nations and the military code than he is in the slave trade boldly claimed them "*as prisoners of war*." Yes, Mr. Chairman, these negroes, declared by one commanding general to be the "property of the public" were boldly asserted by another to be "*prisoners of war*." In the mean time, a Lieut. Reynolds was deputed to conduct the emigrating Indians to their home west of the Mississippi. To him Mr. Collins, agent for the Creek warriors, and acting, as Watson says, for him, applied to get possession of the negroes, and presented the order of the Secretary of War for their delivery to Collins. There is some difference in the relation of Collins, and that of Lieut. Reynolds. Mr. Watson says distinctly that Gen. Gaines and Lieut. Reynolds both refused to obey the order of the honorable Secretary to deliver over the negroes. Gen. Gaines appears to have declared them "*prisoners of war*," and ordered them to be sent to the place assigned the Seminoles west of the Mississippi; and Lieut. Reynolds "took the responsibility," and started with Indians and negroes, both slaves and freemen. At Little Rock, Collins again demanded them of Lieut. Reynolds, who, not having sufficient military force to enable him to hold the Indians in subjection, if irritated by an attempt to deliver the negroes to Collins, called upon the Gov. of Arkansas for troops to enable him to effect that object. But Gov. Roane refused all military aid, and required Lieut. Reynolds to proceed forthwith on his way, for fear of a massacre by the Indians. In his answer to Lieut. Reynolds, he says: "Your immediate departure will ensure peace, and avert the outrages you have such good cause to expect." Thus, Mr. Chairman, you see that we were brought to the very verge of a war west of the Mississippi, by reason of the efforts of our officers to maintain slavery and the slave trade. But Collins, who, so far as the public documents speak of him, was the agent of the Creek warriors, now applied to these same Creek warriors for possession of the negroes. This, sir, is another curiosity. The negroes were taken west among the very Indians who originally captured them, and in whose name the Government officers and Collins were trying to obtain possession of them. But these warriors, having received the \$14,600 in "*the better currency*," showed no disposition to interfere any further. Indeed, they said that they had sold the negroes, and that the United States has possession of them, and that the Creeks were under no ob-

ligation to interfere any further in the business. But Collins, ever faithful to his trust, remained in that country, and a correspondence took place between him and the honorable Secretary of War, and other officers of Government, in regard to the measures to be adopted in order to get these negroes back into slavery. Orders were sent to Gen. Arbuckle, and councils of the Indians were called; the Indians, however, showed little disposition to aid their white brethren in enslaving those who had gained their liberty by such a concatenation of circumstances. In short, sir, they showed almost as much insensibility to the claims of our slaveholders, as our more civilized friend, John Bull, has so often evinced; excepting always, that the Indians civilly answered all questions on the subject, while I believe the British Government has never condescended even to hold any correspondence whatever for delivering up fugitive slaves. But, sir, while the Indians appeared thus insensible to the appeals made to them in behalf of slavery, the negroes themselves appeared perfectly *callous to all entreaties*. The Indians would not deliver up, and the negroes appeared to have become suddenly impressed with the belief that they could take care of themselves. They now felt themselves restored to that liberty of which they had so long been unjustly deprived. Indeed, it appears that the negroes were thoroughly convinced of the perfect safety and propriety of "*immediate emancipation and of Western colonization*." They, at all events, appeared determined to give to the world some practical demonstrations on these subjects; and, sir, I believe they are yet carrying out that determination.

Thus you see, Mr. Chairman, that the efforts of our honorable Secretary of War, and of other officers of Government, failed to bring those negroes back to a state of slavery, and the agents of Watson were compelled to return without the negroes.

But, in the meantime, Mr. Watson's money was gone, and the *negroes were gone also*. He had bought the negroes, as he says, upon the assurance of title held out to him by the officers of Government.—These officers had exerted their utmost skill to get the negroes for him but all had failed; and Mr. Watson then applied to Congress for compensation for his loss. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the honorable Secretary of War both recommend the claim to the favorable consideration of Congress, and urge us to make the appropriation. Of the propriety of doing so, I shall say nothing at this time. I hope to do my duty on that subject when it comes before us. My object now is to show the manner in which the officers of this Government have attempted, not only to make us, in our national character, slaveholders and slave-traders, but to make the freemen of the North pay this purchaser for slaves he could *not catch*. I will beg leave to give the opinion of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his own words. In a letter to the honorable Secretary of War, dated July 1, 1840, speaking of these negroes, he says: "Any attempt at enforcing a claim to them under the Creek warriors, would, perhaps, have resulted in a conflict; and, as the hazard of such an issue prevented the use of more than persuasive means, I think Gen. Watson has a just claim on the United States for the money he paid, and interest."

This, sir, is the logic of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and that same opinion is endorsed by the honorable Secretary of War. I have stated, and I think I have shown from authentic documents, that the war in Florida originated in attempts by our Executive officers to support and maintain slavery; that it has been renewed and carried on for that purpose; that the money of our nation has been paid for the purchase of fugitive slaves and of Indian slaves. To these I now add the fact that those officers deem it just that we should pay for slaves which the owners *cannot obtain*.

When I obtained the floor, I intended to have called the attention of the committee to the manner in which this war was renewed after Gen. Macomb's treaty of peace in 1839. But I have already detained the committee too long, and I will only say that, if the public papers are to be accredited, the people of Florida held meetings for the purpose of protesting against that treaty, for the reason that it permitted the Indians to remain in Florida; and they urged that the territory occupied by them would afford a harbor for *runaway slaves*. Of course the war was renewed, and continues, and like a mighty maelstrom, draws within its vortex and swallows up the immense resources of the nation. For a period almost equal to that of our Revolutionary war, the people of the Northern States have been taxed for the purpose of carrying on this contest, directed principally against the fugitive slaves in Florida. To this war the feelings, the principles, the interests, the honor of the free States are opposed; yet, sir, they have been, and still are, compelled to furnish means for its prosecution.— Revolting as the trading in slaves is to the feeling of our Northern people, they have been constrained to supply the means of purchasing their fellow beings. Holding, as the people of the North do, "*these truths to be self-evident, that man is born free, and is endowed by his Creator with the inalienable right of liberty,*" they have been obliged to furnish money to pay for the re-capture and re-enslaving of those who, fleeing from the power that oppressed them, had sought in the wilds of Florida those rights to which, by the laws of nature and of nature's God, they were entitled.

Sir, I am anxious to see a period put to those abuses of Northern rights. I desire to see this war terminated at the earliest possible moment; but I fear it will not be accomplished by the method proposed by the gentleman from South Carolina. My own opinion is that all attempt to remove the Indians and leave the negroes will prove abortive. We are told that the negroes control the Indians. With those negroes, an unconditional surrender to us would be a voluntary separation from their relatives and families, and slavery for life. They will probably prefer death to such an alternative. Of course the war will continue until the murder of those people by our army shall proclaim peace to Florida, who refuses peace upon other terms. For one, I am prepared to send all who will surrender themselves as prisoners of war, to the western country, under the pledged faith of this nation to protect them in the enjoyment of their lives, their liberty, and their domestic relations; and for that purpose I have prepared an amendment, which I now send to the Chair.